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October 7, 1999

Dockets Management Branch (HFA-305)

Food and Drug Administration
5630 Fishers La., Rm. 1061
Rockville, MD 20852

RE: Dockets **98N-1230**, **96P-0418**, and **97P-0197**

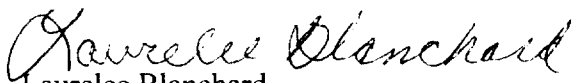
Dear Administrator:

The most effective and direct way to reduce salmonella in eggs would be to eliminate the practice of forced molting.

Every year, when egg production drops, approximately 195 million hens in North America endure a bizarre torment called forced molting. This cruel practice throws the hens' systems into collapse, stressing and shocking their worn-out bodies into laying one more batch of eggs before being sent to slaughter. The frightened birds are deprived of food for up to two weeks, water is restricted for up to eight weeks and they are kept in pitch dark for weeks on end. As a result, hundreds of thousands die while those who survive grow weak, shed all their feathers, and lose up to 35 percent of their body weight. Forced molting also weakens hens' bones, resulting in fragile, broken limbs.

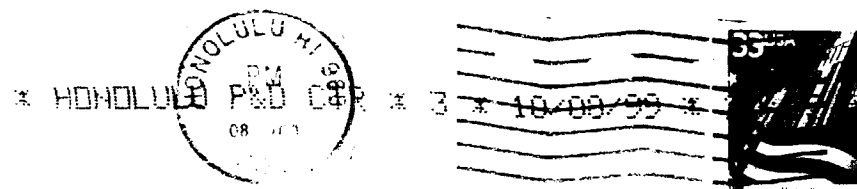
The stressful conditions weaken their immune systems so badly that they become prone to disease and salmonella infections.

Sincerely,


Laurelee Blanchard
260 E. Kuiaha Road
Haiku, HI 96708

96P-0418

C747



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20852/0001



CROSS FILE SHEET

File Number:

98N-1230/ C 747

See File Number:

97P-0197/ C 748

96P-0418/ C 747